THEOSOPHY

VOL. 66, NO. 3 JANUARY, 1978

Our duty is to keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions. To oppose and counteract—after due investigation and proof of its irrational nature—bigotry in every form, religious, scientific, or social, and cant above all, whether as religious, sectarianism or as belief in miracles or anything supernatural. What we have to do is to seek to obtain knowledge of all the laws of nature, and to diffuse it. To encourage the study of those laws least understood by modern people, the so-called Occult Sciences, based on the true knowledge of nature, instead of, as at present, on superstitious beliefs based on blind faith and authority.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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THE THEOSOPHY COMPANY

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II *The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and*

III *The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.*

THEOSOPHY was established as a monthly publication in November, 1912, by Robert Crosbie. It is devoted to the Objects of the Theosophical Movement. The publisher is The Theosophy Company, of Los Angeles, California, U.S.A., an incorporated association legally empowered to receive donations and bequests in furtherance of these Objects, which are repeated in its charter. THEOSOPHY is edited independently of any theosophical society or other organization. The Publishers assume full responsibility for all unsigned articles therein.

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THE THEOSOPHY COMPANY

245 WEST 33RD ST., LOS ANGELES, CALIF. 90007, U.S.A.

AUM

The impress of the Self is entangled in the meshes of desire for what is not Self; through devotion to the eternal Self these meshes are completely destroyed.
—*The Crest Jewel of Wisdom*

THEOSOPHY

VOLUME 66 JANUARY, 1978 NUMBER 3

THE EVOLUTION OF MIND

STUDENTS of Theosophy, Mr. Judge remarked in one of his letters (*Letters That Have Helped Me,* p. 72), "are not working for some definite organization, but for a change in the Manas and Buddhi of the Race." And that is why, he added, this work "may seem indefinite, but it is, nevertheless, very defined and very great in scope." One way of regarding this change would be as the development of "the habit of thinking with the higher mind," to which H.P.B. refers in "Dialogues Between the Two Editors." Is it possible to know something more of this mode of thinking?

Some clues are provided in her article:

> There are persons who never think with the higher faculties of their mind at all; those who do so are the minority and are thus, in a way, *beyond,* if not above, the average of human kind. These will think even upon ordinary matters on that *higher* plane. . . . Why is it that one person sees poetry in a cabbage or a pig with her little ones, while another will perceive in the loftiest things only their lowest and most material aspect, will laugh at the "music of the spheres," and ridicule the most sublime conceptions and philosophies? This difference depends simply on the innate power of the mind to think on the higher or on the lower plane. . . . The person who is endowed with this faculty of thinking even about the most trifling things from the higher plane of thought has, by virtue of that gift which he possesses, a plastic power of formation, so to say, in his very imagination. Whatever such a person may think about, his thought will be so far more intense than the thought of an

ordinary person, that by this very intensity it obtains the power of creation.

In another article ("Psychic and Noetic Action") H.P.B. speaks of the human body as an Æolian harp, "chorded with two sets of strings, one made of pure silver, the other of catgut." These sets of strings resound in response to quite different levels of vibration. One need only think of the effect of reading attentively some writing of H.P.B.'s, or, indeed, an essay by Emerson or the work of a philosophic poet. Our minds are tuned in a particular way by saturating them with such expressions.

The ideas in such works are embodied in familiar imagery, yet not confined. They call into action the corresponding principles in ourselves, becoming, as we say, an "inspiration."

But what is the "substance" of the thought of higher mind? This thought, H.P.B. says, cannot act directly on the body as its consciousness belongs to quite another plane and planes of ideation." For access to our plane, "it has to act solely through its *alter ego*—the Personal Self."

Looking at the matter in another way, we might see the Platonic mode of reasoning from universals to particulars as a translation of knowing from the plane of higher manas to the limited circumstances of earth life. General principles are *illustrated* in physical relationships, but not exhausted by them, nor fully represented. All general ideas have something of the nature of higher mind in them, since they make reasoning possible. The power to reason, while known to us as a capacity of lower manas, is nonetheless an expression on this plane of the potentialities of a higher plane. "In other words," as H.P.B. puts it, "the ray of our Higher Ego, the lower Manas, has its higher light, the reason or rational powers of the Nous, to help it in the struggle with Kamic desires." ("Old Philosophers and Modern Critics.") And who has not noticed, in the course of daily affairs, how the effort to understand the *meaning* of an event reduces the "attachment" aspect of one's personal involvement in it? We begin to see the event in a higher light.

All science, in the present epoch, may be recognized as the application of reason to the phenomena of nature. Yet it is only a partial application of the power of mind, since it admits as general principles only those ideas which it is able to infer from large collections of particulars. The approach is Aristotelian, not Pla-

tonic. Our science begins with the industrious collection of facts, and then, when a supposed sufficiency has been accumulated, looks for signs of some organizing principle. In this way science as we know it limits its generalizations to the plane of material existence. Yet the achievements of science and the resulting freedom from the forms and dogmatism of organized religion were counted as a notable forward step for the Theosophical Movement by Mr. Judge, and may therefore be understood as contributing to the great change in the Buddhi and the Manas of the Race.

Indeed, those who have given particular attention to the history of science have been obliged to admit that its progress has depended very largely on "intuitions" which have pointed the way to new discovery. Such flashes of insight are often recognized as such—by Albert Einstein in particular—and while today they are far from being understood, the theosophist is free to see in them inspirations deriving from Higher Mind. H.P.B.'s evaluation of the importance of Science to human development is made in these terms:

> Ideal laws can be perceived by the intuitive faculty alone; they are beyond the domain of argument and dialectics, and no one can understand or rightly appreciate them through the explanations of another mind, even though this mind be claiming a direct revelation. . . . Despite all their lack of a higher spiritual intuition, the world's debt to the representatives of modern physical science is immense. . . .

Her criticism of science was solely on the ground of the unwarranted presumption of scientists who went beyond the evidence of their discoveries to "poach on the domains of psychology and metaphysics."

The race as a whole may be regarded as a collective entity in which, step by step, the higher Manas is achieving more complete expression. Lower mind, without the inspiration of the Higher Ego, would be but a calculating machine entirely at the service of the appetites of the lower man—as, indeed, seems commonly the case in this fourth Round—yet another tendency is increasingly perceptible. As Mr. Judge says in the *Ocean:*

> But as Mind is being evolved more and more as we proceed in our course along the line of the race development, there can be perceived underneath in all countries the beginning of the transition from the animal possessed of the germ of real mind to the man of mind complete. This day is therefore known to the Masters, who have given out some of the old truths, as the "transition period."

It follows that, as time passes, the lower Manas of the Race will gradually become a better receptacle for the thought of its higher alter ego, and that the current of impersonal and philosophical thought will grow noticeably stronger in serious intellectual inquiry. In short, some aspect of higher Manasic thinking is a part of the blend of human expression, varying in its influence according to individual potentiality and choice. The psychological law governing in this is given by H.P.B.:

> Every human organ and each cell in the latter has a keyboard of its own, like that of a piano, only that it registers and emits sensations instead of sounds. Every key contains the potentiality of good or bad, of producing harmony or disharmony. This depends on the impulse given and the combinations produced; on the force of the touch of the artist at work, a "double-faced Unity," indeed. And it is the action of this or the other "Face" of the Unity that determines the nature and the dynamical character of the manifested phenomena as a resulting action, and this whether they be physical or mental. For the whole of man is guided by this double-faced Entity. If the impulse comes from the "Wisdom above," the Force applied being noetic or spiritual, the results will be actions worthy of the divine propeller; if from the "terrestrial, devilish wisdom" (psychic power), man's activities will be selfish, based solely on the exigencies of his physical, hence animal, nature. The above may sound to the average reader as pure nonsense; but every Theosophist must understand when told that there are *Manasic* as well as *Kamic* organs in him, although the cells of his body answer to both physical and spiritual impulses. ("Psychic and Noetic Action.")

It is entirely reasonable to think that the materials supplied to students for study are of a sort intended to awaken the faculties of the higher mind. The "Fundamentals" which come at the beginning of Vol. I of *The Secret Doctrine* are tools for habituating us to think in terms of the universal conceptions natural to higher Manas. *"Mind,"* as this higher principle, Mr. Judge says, is "the latent or active potentiality of *Cosmic Ideation,* the essence of every form, the basis of every law, the potency of every principle in the universe." He continues (in "Synthesis of Occult Science"): "Human thought is the reflection or reproduction in the realm of man's consciousness of these forms, laws, and principles."

That, at least, is the goal or ideal of human development. Some understanding of what is involved in this evolutionary task of

humans is given by H.P.B. in one of her answers to questions in *Lucifer:*

> Buddhi is latent in present humanity, but you cannot speak of it as "incarnating" in Manas: Manas is not fleshly. Further, Manas aspires towards Buddhi, Buddhi does not stoop to Manas. Buddhi will become active during the Sixth Race. . . . If you refer to p. 167, vol. ii, "Secret Doctrine," you will see that it distinctly states that "those who were half ready," who received but a spark, constitute average humanity. Therefore it is incorrect to say that *we* are the Manasaputras. . . . We are the Pitris and received a spark from the Manasaputras. Those in whom the Manasaputras, as such, incarnate, do not belong to our average humanity. Dwija means an initiated one—or a being whose Higher Ego is active; the initiated Brahmins of old were called Dwijas. (See THEOSOPHY 65: 338-39.)

This process of self-transformation is accomplished through the progressive effort to think ever more naturally as the higher mind thinks. As said in "Psychic and Noetic Action":

> The "Higher Ego" cannot act directly on the body, as its consciousness belongs to quite another plane and planes of ideation: the "lower" *Self* does: and its action and behaviour *depend on its free will and choice* as to whether it will gravitate more towards its parent ("the Father in Heaven") or the "animal" which it informs, the man of flesh. The "Higher Ego," as part of the essence of the UNIVERSAL MIND, is unconditionally omniscient on its own plane, and only potentially so in our terrestrial sphere.

To which may be added:

> With the awakening of the reasoning consciousness, which must occur sooner or later in every man, he becomes conscious of the gulf between the animal and the human life; he realizes this more and more fully, till, at last—on the highest plane of consciousness—the fundamental contradiction of life is recognized as only an *apparent* contradiction, pertaining solely to the sphere of animal existence, and the meaning of life, after which the personal man seeks in vain, is at last discovered. ("Leo Tolstoi and his Unecclesiastical Christianity.")

The "contradiction" here referred to must take various forms, but its basis is undoubtedly the outward-looking reversal of the idea of "reality." Its cause is the "blind, deceptive element" of the astral light, of which the personal mind is made. While the inner constitution of the personal mind is Manasic, its functioning essence is leavened with the Astral Light, and this, H.P.B. remarks, though it makes of the Manasic Ray "an active spiritual element on this plane, still brings it into so close contact with matter as

to entirely becloud its divine nature and stultify its intuitions."

One effect of this deception is that the *lower* Self, while "manifesting through our organic system, acting on this plane of illusion, imagines itself the *Ego Sum,"* remaining wholly unaware of its higher source and true identity. A broader consequence is the cultural effect of this "heresy of separateness," evident in the fact that all the sciences relating to man assume almost without question that he is no more than his physical body. This limits the resources of both anthropology and archaeology to various kinds of *physical* remains, leaving all evolutionary theory securely in the hands of the Darwinists. Human science, as such, can conceive of no alternatives to an ape-like ancestor, while the physical and biological sciences are subject to corresponding limitations. Only material data are regarded as having value for scientific study. The possibility of higher planes of causation is excluded in hypothesis-making. There is elaborate use of mathematics in most of the sciences, but the conclusions reached all tend to be mechanistic, whether directly or in terms of statistical treatments, and for this reason the very forms of scientific thinking are adverse to any ideas of spiritual or even psychic causation. One result of this meticulously followed method is the shutting out of the play of higher mind in the practice of the sciences. Commenting on such habits, H.P.B. remarks (in "Dialogues Between the Two Editors"):

> The idiosyncrasy of the person determines in which "principle" of the mind the thinking is done, as also the faculties of a preceding life, and sometimes the heredity of the physical. That is why it is so very difficult for a materialist—the metaphysical portion of whose brain is almost atrophied—to raise himself, or for one who is naturally spiritually minded, to descend to the level of the matter-of-fact vulgar thought.

A similar analysis led her to say, in "Occult or Exact Science?", that men of science are quite helpless when it comes to understanding occult phenomena and the hidden laws that "govern nature and rule mankind." The obstacle is their highly developed "rationality," which in this case is of the intellect alone, not *reason*.

The exercise of the mind and the method of education in Theosophy are quite different from the start. The account of the world and of man begins with conceptions of spirit and universal mind. The unfolding of metaphysical causation is traced in great cycles of involution, to be followed by evolution. There is a parallel between the evolution of worlds and of the human races, with

everywhere an interdependence.

H.P.B. sometimes remarks, during the course of an exposition, that the student, when confronted by puzzles, will need to use his intuition and find his own way. Except for the demonstrations of phenomena in the early days of the Theosophical Movement—which initially served a purpose but were suspended because of an excess of wonder-seeking—the demonstrations of the truth in the Theosophical teachings were to be found in the logic of ethics and metaphysical reasoning. The full body of the teaching gave a vastly comprehensive explanation of the entirety of human experience. Yet, despite its inherent reasonableness, Theosophy remained unacceptable to the scientific mind and to minds trained in scientific assumptions and ways of thinking. This, H.P.B. makes plain, was inevitable.

Even serious students may find themselves hungering for the kind of evidential certainty they have learned to expect from scientific teachings, and again and again both H.P.B. and Mr. Judge found it necessary to explain, by one or another means, that Theosophic education proceeds at a different level. It starts with the idea of universal brotherhood, a moral or ethical postulate, which is the ground of all subsequent thinking. Primary causation arises in cosmic ideation, which pervades all natural processes and finds explicit focus in human beings as the agents and protagonists of the general progress of the whole of life. It is the presence in human beings of this principle of mind that needs recognition in order for its awakening and full function to come about. We are to learn, as Mr. Judge says, to sense and apprehend nature just as nature unfolds in ourselves. "When, therefore, the Monad has passed through the form of the animal ego, involved and unfolded the human form, the higher triad of principles awakens from the sleep of ages."

The Theosophical teachings are tools for assisting ourselves in this awakening. The demands of the content are such that it stirs to activity the higher light of the lower mind, clearing the way for inner inspiration. At first, as Mr. Judge says in his *Letters* (page 72), this may seem "indefinite" indeed. Trained to look for certainty only in sense perception and in the exactitudes of mathematical calculations, we must now learn to seek the clues to reality in our own intuitions, and for procedures of thought to use analogy and correspondence. General laws are given, with some

suggestion concerning how they apply, but the finalities of calculation are withheld, it being explained that we are not yet ready for practical occult knowledge. When it comes to such topics as Karma and Cycles, we have Mr. Judge's Aphorisms to study, but no exact figures on when cycles begin and end. We are invited to learn the philosophy, practice the ethics, to study and find our own way.

In books and articles, we are instructed in the *modes* of the laws of nature, subjective and objective, but not the practical dynamics. The instruction begins with general ideas. It is the Platonic method—the reversal of the scientific method. Our education, in short, is preparatory, and action on what we learn begins with self-reform and with learning to help others, not with the manipulative "experimentation" that much of scientific discovery involves. The approach afforded the student of Theosophy, which he comes to understand and appreciate in time, is suggestively described in the closing words of Mr. Judge's article, "The Kali Yuga." He says:

> For the present, students will have to be satisfied with the general statement that we are in Kali Yuga. The characteristics of the present time show it clearly enough, for while physical civilization is high the spiritual side of it is low and dark, and selfishness is the prevailing order. None of us can really pretend to know more than this, for while we have the Brahmanical calculation and the words of the *Secret Doctrine,* yet that is taking the word of another, plausible, of course, and also concordant with all other parts of the system, but still not of our own knowledge. The beginning of this Age and the time of its ending are dark to us; but the general theory, sufficient for our present needs, is perfectly clear, and as good an assumption as any of those indulged by science—certainly better than the incredible ideas of the theologian. Of one thing we are getting more and more proof each day, and that is of the immense period during which man has been on the earth, and with that admitted all the great cyclic lengths given by the ancient and modern Theosophists of weight are entitled to credence.
>
> We can also get great comfort from the theory given out at various times, that in Kali Yuga a small effort goes farther for results than the same when made in a better Age. In the other Ages the rates of all things are slower than in this; hence, evil now seems quick; but in the same way good is also much quicker in effect and reach than in a slower time.

It is surely the element of the higher mind in ourselves that enables us to recognize the great good sense of what is said here.

THE WISDOM RELIGION

II: ITS TRANSMISSION

IF we take for guide the first item of H.P.B.'s "Summing Up" in the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 272), we are led to the following conclusions:

(1) High and exalted Beings watched over the childhood of Humanity and provided the race with these Teachings.

(2) They were then passed orally from one early race to another.

(3) The Teachings thus reached the "Wise Men" of the Fifth Race, who had been saved and rescued from the cataclysms that destroyed Atlantis.

(4) These wise men passed their lives *in learning, not teaching,* this Wisdom.

(5) The method of the checking and testing is given. It was carried out by adepts whose perfected powers enabled them to do so.

(6) This vast accumulation of knowledge, gathered by generations of initiated seers and prophets, was adequately recorded in the form of "a few pages of geometrical signs and glyphs."

In both *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine,* H.P.B. speaks of "an old Book—so very old that our modern antiquarians might ponder over its pages an indefinite time, and still not agree as to the nature of the fabric upon which it is written. It is the only original copy now in existence." (*Isis* I, i.)

In the Introduction to *The Secret Doctrine* she says:

> The "very old Book" is the original work from which the many volumes of *Kiu-ti* were compiled. Not only this latter and the *Siphrah Dzeniouta* but even the *Sepher Jezirah,* the work attributed by the Hebrew Kabalists to their Patriarch Abraham (!), the book of *Shu-king,* China's primitive Bible, the sacred volumes of the Egyptian Thoth-Hermes, the Purânas in India, and the Chaldean *Book of Numbers* and the *Pentateuch* itself, are all derived from that one small parent volume. Tradition says, that it was taken down in *Senzar,* the secret sacerdotal tongue, from the words of Divine Beings, who dictated it to the sons of Light, in Central Asia, at the very beginning of the 5th (our) race; for there was a time when its language (the *Sen-zar)* was known to the Initiates of every nation, when the forefathers of the Toltec understood it as easily as the inhabitants of the lost Atlantis, who inherited it, in their turn, from

the sages of the 3rd Race, the *Manushis*, who learnt it direct from the *Devas* of the 2nd and 1st Races. (I, xliii.)

In *Isis Unveiled* she identifies the Teaching as the tree of KNOWLEDGE:

> The "secret doctrine" has for many centuries been like the symbolical "man of sorrows" of the prophet Isaiah. "Who hath believed our report?" its martyrs have repeated from one generation to another. The doctrine has grown up before its persecutors "as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground; it hath no form, nor comeliness . . . it is despised and rejected of men; and they hid their faces from it". . . . But the tenacious vitality it exhibits all over the globe, wherever there are a group of men to quarrel over it, is the best proof that the seed planted by our fathers on "the other side of the flood" was that of a mighty oak, not the spore of a mushroom theology. No lightning of human ridicule can fell to the ground, and no thunderbolts ever forged by the Vulcans of science are powerful enough to blast the trunk, or even scar the branches of this world-tree of KNOWLEDGE. (I, 574.)

This "tree" has its seedling in the heart of every human. As H.P.B. remarks in *The Secret Doctrine:*

> To the Eastern Occultist the TREE of Knowledge in the Paradise of man's own heart, becomes the Tree of Life eternal, and has nought to do with man's animal senses. It is an absolute mystery that reveals itself only through the efforts of the imprisoned Manas and the Ego to liberate themselves from the thraldom of sensuous perception and see, in the light of the one eternal present Reality. . . . To the follower of the true Eastern archaic Wisdom, to him who worships in spirit nought outside the Absolute Unity, that ever-pulsating great *Heart* that beats throughout, as in every atom of nature, each such atom contains the germ from which he may raise the Tree of Knowledge, whose fruits give life eternal and not physical life alone. (II, 587-88.)

Meanwhile, as beautifully expressed in *Isis Unveiled:*

> Like signal-fires of the olden times, which, lighted and extinguished by turns upon one hill-top after another, conveyed intelligence along a whole stretch of country, so we see a long line of "wise" men from the beginning of history down to our own times communicating the word of wisdom to their direct successors. Passing from seer to seer, the "Word" flashes out like lightning, and while carrying off the initiator from human sight forever, brings the new initiate into view. (II, 571.)

As related, the Fifth Race Adepts learnt the Record, reduced it to writing and composed the commentaries. Here we may repeat

what is said of the Hindu version of the Oral Tradition:

> The *Veda* of the earliest Aryans, before it was written, went forth into every nation of the Atlanto-Lemurians, and sowed the first seeds of all the now existing old religions. The offshoots of the never dying tree of wisdom have scattered their dead leaves even on Judæo-Christianity. (*Secret Doctrine*, II, 483.)

"The Fourth Race," we are told in *The Secret Doctrine*, "developed Speech." H.P.B. says:

> Speech then developed, according to occult teaching, in the following order:
>
> 1. Monosyllabic speech: that of the first approximately fully developed human beings at the close of the Third Root-race, the "golden-coloured" yellow-complexioned men, after their separation into sexes, and the full awakening of their minds. Before that, they communicated through what would now be called "thought-transference." . . . This monosyllabic speech was the vowel parent, so to speak, of the monosyllabic languages mixed with hard consonants, still in use among the yellow races which are known to the anthropologist.
>
> 2. These linguistic characteristics developed into the agglutinative languages. The latter were spoken by some Atlantean races, while . . . the "cream" of the Fourth Race gravitated more and more toward the apex of physical and intellectual evolution . . . leaving as an heirloom to the nascent Fifth (the Aryan) Race the inflectional, highly developed languages. . . .
>
> 3. The inflectional speech—the root of the Sanskrit . . . was the first language (now the mystery tongue of the Initiates, of the Fifth Race.)

In an article published in the *Theosophist*, it is said:

> It can be proved that before the final division and classification of languages there existed two languages in every nation: (a) the profane or popular language of the masses; (b) the sacerdotal or secret language of the initiates of the temples and mysteries—the *latter being one and universal.* Or, in other words, every great people had, like the Egyptians, its demotic and its hieratic writing and language, which had resulted first in a pictorial writing or the hieroglyphics, and later on in a phonetic alphabet. . . . The direct progenitor of the Vedic Sanskrit was the sacerdotal language (which has a distinct name among the initiates.) The Vach—its *alter-ego* or the "mystic self," the sacerdotal speech of the initiated Brahman—became in time the mystery language of the inner temple, studied by the initiates of Egypt and Chaldea; of the Phœnicians and the Etruscans; of the Pelasgi and Palenquans; in short, of the whole

globe: The appellation Devanâgarî is the synonym of, and identical with, the Hermetic and Hieratic Neter-Khari (divine speech) of the Egyptians. . . . Real Devanâgarî—non-phonetic characters—meant formerly the outward symbols, so to say, *the signs used in the inter-communication between gods and initiated mortals.* Hence their great sacredness and the silence maintained throughout the Vedic and Brahmanical periods about any object concerned with, or referring to, reading and writing. It was *the* language of the gods.

(*To be continued*)

THE THOUGHTS OF THE DEAD

A man dies of a contagious disease; months after his death, aye, years—a bit of clothing, an object touched by him during his sickness, may communicate the disease to a person more physiologically sensitive than the persons around him, while having no effect upon the latter. And why should not an idea, a *thought,* exercise the same influence? Thought is *no less material nor objective* than the imponderable and mysterious germs of various infectious diseases, the causes of which are such a puzzle for science. Since the mind of a living person can so influence another mind that the former can force the latter to think and believe whatever it will—in short, can *psychologize* that other mind, so can the thought of a person already dead. Once generated and sent out, that thought will live upon its own energy. It has become independent of the brain and mind which gave it birth. So long as its concentrated energy undissipated, it can act as a potential influence when brought into contact with the living brain and nervous system of a person susceptibly predisposed. The unhealthy action thus provoked may lead the sensitive into a temporary insanity of self-delusion, that quite clouds the sense of his own individuality. The morbid action thus once set up, the whole floating group of the dead man's thoughts rushes into the sensitive's brain, and he can give what seems test after test of the presence of the deceased and convince the predisposed investigator that the individuality of the "control," "guide," or communicating intelligence is thoroughly established.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE PLAINS OF SPACE

THE "liberation of the Soul from the body" is the consummation sought by every mystic in all time, for only so can any man receive the final assurance and confirmation of his own immortality.

The time will come when men will look with favor on the method of education which will enable them to realize this most spiritual knowledge. Countless men have endeavored to reach the goal through the practice of religion. Although the embodied Soul loses its hold on spiritual knowledge by the act of incarnation, knowledge does not thereby cease, any more than the sun ceases to shine because a man becomes blind, or because of the diurnal revolution of the earth. The blind man still receives the warmth of the ever-shining sun, and may regain his sight, or those in darkness once more enter the light of day. The religious man's faith in immortality is only a blind belief, but it proceeds none the less from the universal radiance of spiritual knowledge. The embodied Soul, being thus gifted with faith only, the utmost the religious man can attain is to become of the same nature as that ideal of spiritual existence on which his faith is fixed. His spiritual existence is dependent and for that reason cannot endure permanently any more than any other dependent existence. The attrition of hard experience in evil as well as good fortune finally wears away his faith in his god and he becomes a believer in the power of evil rather than in the power of good. This is materialism. His Supreme Being is now power over nature, so that he may compel for himself the ideal status longed for. Out of the disillusionment of religious faith and practice proceeds by natural alternation the soulless embellishment now worshipped by so many as science. If religion is faith without knowledge, science is knowledge without faith. Of the two there are few who would not choose tropical night to polar light. And this in fact is the case, for the lowest and most degraded of men have a religion of some kind in which they seek, and from which they derive consolation in the ebb-tide of life, while the man has not yet been found to speak of the "conso-

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NOTE.—This article was first printed in THEOSOPHY 14:200.

lations of science" when he has lost all that to him is dear.

The natural mystic is one who has not lost faith and who has not yet gained knowledge. The alternations of religion and materialism have left him high and dry on the plains of space, tenantless alike of heaven and hell. The keenest enjoyment, the bitterest pain, the anguish of loss and despair, have all been brought to bear on the trembling Soul, which has not yet found light in the darkness, which is helpless as a blind man is. Yet he still *is,* and in that fact, and the recognition of it, he is saved from that lethargy which is the precursor of the death of the Soul—the loss of all that has been gained in the long pilgrimage of spiritual evolution, with its countless series of birth and life and death in matter. Of all that hath been, naught remains but himself—the Soul. What then has he gained?

The opportunity of spiritual renaissance. He is disembodied, but not yet free. He is dead, but not yet alive. Will he be reborn viable in the world of spiritual existence? Or will he, still hovering o'er the stormy sea of human life, exhausted, bleeding, broken-winged, drop on the swelling waves and disappear within the first great vortex of a new evolution of primordial matter?

It depends on himself, for naught remains but himself. His God is gone. His powers are gone. All that upon which he placed dependence is gone. He is as helpless, as unprotected, as a newborn child. That, indeed, is what he is, and of himself alone he must recognize the fact—and act upon it; not, indeed, as the child does, unconsciously, but consciously: He must inbreathe the air of space, he must cry out, as the child does. Then, and not till then, will he find out for himself that space is not a void, but a higher plane of Life.

At some time the first swimming creatures must have left the sea for land, must have exchanged the oxygen in water for the richer and more intense ozone of the air. That transit could never have been at the tick of some miraculous clock, but a process, a long-drawn series of intermediate existences between water and earth. So with him who dreams of exchanging the physical, psychical and mental existence we call life for the free spaces of the spiritual Life. All that men call real, all that men esteem to be finalities, all that men declare to be the standard of life here and hereafter, and by which they seek to measure the Eternal Verity itself—all these must be themselves weighed in the balance and

cast aside by him who would live and move and have his being in the plains of space. For all these are but the atmosphere of matter, the breath of human life. Only he who has already assimilated the merit of manifold existences on the plane of matter, and to whom the sacrifice of the God of Matter is no deprivation, but the privation of mortal existence—only he will ever find within himself the courage to lift up the Voice of the Silence, and in reply hear the voices of the Immortals welcoming him Home from the world of form to the world of the formless.

It is not the grim terrors of dreadful shapes and infernal powers that hurl back the untoward aspirant, the hopeless incurable in the Mysteries, to his cubicle of clay. Nor yet is it, as so many mystics still think, any encasement in mere flesh and matter which withholds the Soul. For many are those who have incarnated bodily on this earth and who still exist, for all that, as independently as they did before on the plains of Space.

What, then, is the real obstacle, the rampart, whether of religion or science, whether of superstition or materialism, which must be overpassed? Many ask, but few, so few, realize that though it may be told in words it cannot be so realized. Let us essay once more to consider the problem whose solution is the "end of toils" for the weary Traveler—the end, because the transit is complete; the beating wings have pause because they have come to rest; the "mortal has become the Immortal"; the Soul has *realized* its Self-dependence, and therefore its eternal independence of Form and Matter. This is Nirvana—*nir vahana,* existence without a vehicle, for "Life precedes form, and Life shall survive the last atom of form." Evidently, on this reflection, what is before us is not a climb but a leap—a jump into what, from the viewpoint of both religion and science, is a void. It is not that we recognize the passing illusion of space, time and causality. It is that we *depend* on them, that is to say, our whole idea of Life rests upon these three human concepts as a bridge upon its piers. Our unrecognized fundamental conception of Space is that of a formless *emptiness*. Formless it is, but the plenum of Life itself, knowing but Unknowable. Our conception of Time is that of endless silence in an endless blank black Space. Like children the child-Soul fears the silence and fears the dark. And, plumbed to the bottom, causality, our sense of the Source of things, is always of something external to Life, something external to our Self, whether an out-

side God or an outside Force. Face it, and the mystic may see that our basic ideas of creation, preservation or destruction, depend upon fear—fear of the Unknown. Who depends on fear can never find rest, neither in this world, nor the world which was, and from which we entered into this, nor in any world to come, into which we go from here. Fearlessness, say all the Teachers, is the prime necessity of the Soul which seeks knowledge of the eternal. The Infinite is the friend of the finite, not its enemy. "Self is the friend of Soul," but "Soul is the enemy of Soul," because the Soul fears to trust the Self, the finite fears the Infinite lest the mortal be lost in the Immortal—and this despite the continual admonition, "Give up thy life if thou wouldst live." And what is life to us, if it is not our most cherished illusions of time, space, and causality, upon whose abutments we rear our house of life and enshrine therein our possessions physical and metaphysical?

It is long before we are even able to contemplate from afar off "the boundless fields of the Unknown." We fear the Unknown because in our ignorance (for fear is the child of Spiritual ignorance) the Unknown is nihilism. Who seeks power, does so because he fears and would be armed—not against the Unknown, but against his fears. Who seeks the consolation of religion, does so because he fears and would be protected by the armed hand of his God. Possessions of any kind, whether of faith or fortune, are the insignia of fear.

How shall this fear be dominated? How shall knowledge of the Unknown be gained? Knowledge does not lie in the instructions given but in the course pursued by the mystic. Of old time and of all time the direction is immediately at hand. How cryptic, chill and barren are the words of the Voice of the Silence to him who would retain his hold of Earth yet gain access to the plains of space.

Yet consider the divine analogy translated into terms of earthly existence. Who would be born a child of earth must give up *all* as the price of entrance into a body here. Once here, he is not dead, but only and very truly one new-born. There is here no nihilism, but Life in form. So, then, who would be born into the plains of space must give up *all* that is here. There is there no Nihilism, but Nirvana—*unconditioned* Life. From the life of Karma to the Life of Nirvana is not a journey in time, in action, in form. Once we dwelt apart from form; then we enveloped all forms, then

were enveloped in them. Now we struggle mightily to rid ourselves of the illusions of Matter—form in any guise—while yet holding desperately to the very essence of Form, which we call our religion or our science.

Close but our physical senses, and we are off the plane of earthly forms. Close but our memories and we are off the plane of metaphysical forms. Close but our creative power and we are off the plane of forms altogether. Our imagination brought to rest, the Divine Eye opens of itself, and we are on the plains of Space whence, as in the Eleventh Chapter of the *Gita,* we are Perceiver of the pageant of mortal evolution, the never-ending stream of conditioned existence.

The Book of Life

In order that one should fully comprehend *individual* life with its physiological, psychic and spiritual mysteries, he has to devote himself with all the fervour of unselfish philanthropy and love for his brother men, to studying and knowing *collective* life, or Mankind. Without preconceptions or prejudice, as also without the least fear of possible results in one or another direction, he has to decipher, understand and *remember* the deep and innermost feelings and the aspirations of the poor people's great and suffering heart. To do this he has first "to attune his soul with that of Humanity," as the old philosophy teaches; to thoroughly master the correct meaning of every line and word in the rapidly turning pages of the Book of Life of Mankind and to be thoroughly saturated with the truism that the latter is a whole inseparable from his own Self.

—H.P.Blavatsky

letters · questions · comment

If the ultimate reality is changeless and the higher in man is changeless, what is it that changes and grows through the processes of evolution?

The immediate answer to this question must be *Soul,* which grows through development of the powers of perception, including more and more planes in their purview. Our perceptions are our forms of seeing. Upon inspection we find that there is layer upon layer of perceptions, affecting our understanding as we identify the perceptions as ourselves. They are the selected raw materials of our evolution. Even in those changes which seem wholly external, the effective alteration, for us, begins in the realm of thought, since human perception is always a matter of interpretation.

Within is always that consciousness which observes, experiences, suffers or enjoys whatever is going on. Mr. Crosbie uses the expression, the "highest sees through the eyes of the lowest," suggesting that the whole process of evolution is one of enlarging and clarifying the many modes of perception through which we encounter life. This is done by means of thought and feeling, animated by will. In a universe of embodied consciousness, the matter with which we are associated is continually impressed by our interpretation of what is happening. As we come to see how partial such judgments may be, we try to broaden them, meanwhile relinquishing our tendency to regard them as the whole truth.

It also becomes clear that the many levels at which perception takes place have each its own modifications and governing laws. Law is inherent, not externally imposed. Ultimately, the source of all change is itself changeless, since the principle of change is not any of its manifestations. What may obtain on one level of perception will not apply in the same way on another, their essential unity being found only in the common principle underlying both manifestations. As we learn to look into the principles of things, the vehicles we use are impressed by synthesizing thought that sees in each specific function a contribution to the being of the whole.

In this way the diverse activities of the mind cease to be conflict, for now the identifications are always unifying. Mr. Crosbie remarks in *The Friendly Philosopher:*

> The mind is both "carrier" and "translator" of both lower and higher self; the attitude determines the quality and kind of action, for one will act according to the attitude of mind firmly held. The great and incalculable value of acting for and as the Supreme is that there is nothing higher in the way of attitude, and this endeavor *must* by its very nature bring about the best results.
>
> What moves the "mind" this way or that is usually desire for the attractions of matter, and self-interest in them; these then move and control the mind through the brain. "We," the Perceiver, does not perceive anything but the "ideas" which the senses and organs present. *He is not wholly awake on this plane;* sometimes he gets partly awakened, but drops off to sleep again, lulled by the sounds and memories of his dream; sometimes "bad dreams" awake him; sometimes he is awakened by the voices of those who are awake.

What is the difference between the meanings of "spiritual" and "divine"?

"Spiritual," according to Webster, means "of, relating to or consisting of spirit." Philosophically, "relating to" suggests the process of becoming—a movement or growth toward Spirit or Consciousness. The term is also used in theosophical writings to distinguish between the permanent and the transitory. In *The Friendly Philosopher* Mr. Crosbie makes a comment which seems to suggest both meanings:

> Nature tends to repeat any action; thought is the plane of action—the creator, preserver and destroyer of Nature's *modes* of action. The *Manasic* plane is the noumenal plane; the plane of the *essence* of the phenomenal; the *active-aspect* of *Atma-Buddhi.*

Mr. Crosbie also says that divinity in all beings evolves from within outward, as the need arises for better and better instruments for making contact with other forms of intelligence. The movement is ever toward increasing individuality: "From the one ocean of Life there finally tends to arise—Divinity." Divinity and true individuality are thus in some sense the same:

> *Divinity is always acquired.* It is not an endowment. It does not exist of itself. . . . Each one has to see and know for

himself. Each one has to gain Divinity of himself, and in his own way. . . . What is Divinity but *all-inclusive* knowledge? True spirituality is not a hazy condition. It is not something that denies any portion of the universe, nor any kind of being. A hazy abstract condition would mean no men, no principles, no opposites; but Divine spirituality is the power to know and see whatever is wished known or seen; it is an intimate knowledge of the ultimate essence of everything in nature. Such knowledge would not mean seeing all things at once, nor being everywhere at the same time, but it is *the power to see and know in any direction*—the power to grasp whatever it wishes—the power to shut out whatever it wishes.

THE SPIRITUAL BRAIN

Man, in addition to the physical, has also a spiritual brain. If the former is wholly dependent for the degree of its receptivity on its own physical structure and development, it is, on the other hand, entirely subordinate to the latter, inasmuch as it is the spiritual Ego alone, and accordingly as it leans more towards its two highest principles, or towards its physical shell, that can impress more or less vividly the outer brain with the perception of things purely spiritual or immaterial. Hence it depends on the acuteness of the mental feelings of the inner Ego, on the degree of spirituality of its faculties, to transfer the impression of the scenes its semi- spiritual brain perceives, the words it hears and what it feels, to the sleeping physical brain of the outer man. The stronger the spirituality of the faculties of the latter, the easier it will be for the Ego to awake the sleeping hemispheres, arouse into activity the sensory ganglia and the cerebellum, and to impress the former—always in full inactivity and rest during the deep sleep of man with the vivid picture of the subject so transferred.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

on the lookout

Life, but no Bodies!

According to report, the complex robot laboratories established on Mars by Viking I in July, 1976, are producing a harvest of paradox upon paradox. In the *Atlantic* for last June David Chandles describes the quest for "life" which scientists are pursuing in experiments with Martian soil samples collected by a remotely controlled scoop from the planet's surface. The objective is to determine, by treating the soil samples, whether low forms of life such as bacteria exist or have existed on Mars. The scientists, Mr. Chandler says, are reluctant to speak openly of what they have found out. In explanation of this reticence he quotes the chief scientist of the Viking enterprise, Gerald Soffen, who has said: "All the signs suggest that life exists on Mars, but we can't find any bodies!" What they did find, from the *Mariner 9* photographs of five years ago, is "a vast network of sinuous channels covering most of the planet," which scientists agree are the dried-up beds of vast rivers. These are not the canals that Percival Lowell believed he saw at the turn of the century, taking them to be proof that Mars was inhabited, but, Chandler says, the river-beds may lead to the same conclusion, since the flow, in the past, of vast amounts of water on Mars "greatly increases the likelihood that advanced and even quite familiar forms of life may have been able to develop there."

Other Possibilities

While another of the Viking scientists, Carl Sagan, has pointed out that the detail in the *Mariner* photographs of the surface of Mars needs to be ten times sharper than is presently possible to obtain clear evidence concerning life, this only leaves the question open. As Chandler says:

> Even if an advanced civilization exists on Mars, even if large cities can be found there, we simply wouldn't have been able to see them yet. We haven't looked closely enough.
>
> But even at the present limits of resolution [photographic detail], some surprising formations have been seen, the most

inexplicable of which are the three-sided pyramids found on the plateau of Elysium. Scientists have tried to find a natural geological process that would account for the formation of those pyramids, some of which are two miles across at the base, but as yet their origin is far from being explained.

Past Cycle of Activity

The river beds have led to the speculation that at one time Mars had a much warmer climate, with rain, rivers and seas. Dr. Sagan is one who thinks it at least possible that in the past Mars may have been a "comfortable, Earth-like planet" supporting a vast array of forms of life. The *Atlantic* writer concludes:

> Many scientists, including Dr. Sagan, believe that this sequence of events has happened not only once but repeatedly throughout Martian history, in a continuing cycle—similar, perhaps, to the cycle of ice ages on our planet.
>
> And if some epochs were comfortable enough to foster the development of advanced forms of life, at least some of those forms then might have been able to adapt to the changing conditions, and might still be around today—perhaps in a dormant state.

Planetary "Rest" Period

There seems here an intuitive or perhaps lucky correspondence with what is said by H.P.B. concerning a planet during "obscuration"—the condition of Mars at present (*S.D.* I, 165)—the rest period between cycles of active life. The obscuration of the globe of a planetary chain brings a time of "falling asleep," which has this characterization:

> . . . according to Occult teaching, Cyclic pralayas so-called are but obscurations during which periods Nature, *i.e.*, everything visible and *invisible* on a resting planet—remains *in status quo*. Nature rests and slumbers, no work of destruction going on on the globe even if no active work is done. All forms, as well as their astral types, remain as they were at the last moment of its activity. The "night" of a planet has hardly any twilight preceding it. It is caught like a huge mammoth by an avalanche, and remains slumbering and frozen till the next dawn of its new day—a very short one indeed in comparison to the "Day of Brahma." (*S.D.* II, 660 fn.)

Mind-Opening Effects

Elsewhere (II, 705 fn.), in connection with a passage in the *Zohar*, H.P.B. remarks that the worlds which fall from activity into obscuration and rest are "entirely changed," apparently meaning that all activity has stopped. Curiously, some of the experiments

pursued with Martian soil obtained results paralleling experiments with soil from Antarctica, "which includes spores transported from elsewhere by the wind, but no active life." But whatever the conclusions drawn from the *Mariner* photographs and the soil samples processed in the Viking laboratories, the chief value of such researches may lie in non-specific psychological effects. The *Atlantic* contributor says in closing:

> The discovery of any kind of life on Mars, however primitive it may prove to be, would profoundly increase the probability of finding other living beings elsewhere in the universe.
>
> As long as Earth was the only life-bearing planet that we knew of, the chance existed that life might have been produced by some fluke, some unique set of circumstances which had not occurred on any other planet—a rare and exotic process so unlikely that we would never find another example.
>
> But if the process is not unique, the universe may be teeming with all manner of beings at every imaginable stage of development. . . .

In short, it is the release of minds from limiting preconception that counts in such investigations, not the narrow conclusions possible under the rule of present scientific assumptions and methods of procedure. It would be well for the reader to refer to what H.P.B. says on page 707 of the second volume of *The Secret Doctrine,* concerning the possibility of life on other planets, and the forms it may take, to realize the confinement of all such research by scientists. H.P.B.'s recommendation that the views of Flammarion be adopted as guide still seems the wisest course for thinking about such matters from a scientific point of view.

Weakening Faith

Reporting on religious belief in the United States, a rambling and disjointed story in the *Los Angeles Times* for July 15 quotes a number of observers inside and outside the churches, to the general effect that while church statistics indicate strong orthodoxy, actual belief or faith in Christian teachings is in steady decline. This apparent contradiction is not difficult to explain:

> Holding religious beliefs, in some ways, may be mostly a matter of keeping with American tradition and character.
>
> Or it may be a case of unthinking conformism, according to a prominent critic of religion, philosopher Walter Kaufmann of Princeton University. "That the beliefs to which so many people pay lip service respond to some deep needs is like

saying that the fact that so many men wear neckties points to a deep need," Kaufmann wrote in The Humanist magazine.

To many, however, the answer lies in the thesis, variously stated, that people are forming private, pick-and-choose "invisible" religions amid a continuing secularization of U.S. culture.

Variety of New Beliefs

The trend, most critics agree, is toward individual private faiths. A Duke University professor says that membership figures are misleading: "Though on the blank calling for him to fill in his 'religious affiliation' he will no doubt write 'Protestant' or 'Baptist,' his official religion will not be his real religion." The present, a church historian concludes, is a time when "astrologers, occultists, seers, evangelical witch doctors, therapists can invent what they wish and find believers." The *Times* story gathers information from at least a score of sources, all pointing to the same decline in belief, although there are still "pockets where people are still heavily institution-oriented and loyal to creeds." There was a noticeable reduction in conventional belief during the tumultuous '60s, and although church membership figures in many areas continue high, the underlying interest, the report suggests, is in the "invisible" or private religions. On the West Coast, which now has the lowest degree of church affiliation, the decline is unambiguous. In the San Fernando Valley of Southern California, a thickly populated suburban region, only sixteen per cent of the population are church-going Christians.

Dogmas Losing Hold

Commenting on research into religious belief in the conventionally Christian South, two writers observed that "The church not only lacks monopoly status in the definition of ultimate concerns, but it seems the church also fails to dominate in providing coping strategies for these same concerns." A Chicago sociologist found in another study that about 26 per cent would rely on traditional religious answers if faced with death or natural disaster, although this figure increased to 44 per cent when "a broader concept of religion" was used.

These developments recall a prophecy made by H.P.B. in "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels," in which she said:

> The Churches will have to part with their cherished dogmas, or the 20th Century will witness the downfall and ruin of all

> Christendom, and with it, belief even in a Christos, as pure Spirit. The very name has now become obnoxious, and theological Christianity must die out, *never to resurrect again* in its present form. This, in itself, would be the happiest solution of all, were there no danger from the natural reaction which is sure to follow: crass materialism will be the consequence and the result of centuries of blind faith, unless the loss of old ideals is replaced by other ideals, unassailable, because *universal,* and built on the rock of eternal truths instead of the shifting sands of human fancy. Pure immateriality must replace, in the end, the terrible anthropomorphism of those ideals in the conceptions of our modern dogmatists.

She also said: "The twentieth century has strange developments in store for humanity, and may even be the last of its name."

Dream Research

Another aspect of the psychic transition of the present appears in the widespread interest in dreams and dreaming, with a number of scientists pursuing research in this area. The poverty of these investigations is revealed in the emphasis on physiological correlates of dreaming and deep-sleep states, much attention being given to rapid eye movement (believed to be closely associated with dreaming), although philosophic observations are sometimes made. In a long article on dream research in the *New York Times Magazine* for last July 3, Laurence Cherry says that as yet there is only the bare outline of a general dream theory:

> The stray feelings and random bits and pieces of emotion that are recorded but necessarily go unrecognized and unexamined during the day must be dealt with during sleep to see how they fit our most interior, most intimate, conceptions of ourselves. "This sort of processing of information is our regular night-shift work," says Dr. Rosalind Cartwright of the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. "Mostly it concerns the personal irrelevant information that has to do with who we are in the world, how we are doing in it. At night we take care of the business of reconciling the new information to our old self, and putting that together so that we can get up and fight another day."

Time of Important Dreams

In a note on the interpretation of dreams, Carl Jung's distinction between "big" and "little" dreams has attention:

> The far more common little dreams concern themselves with the trivialities of daily life, particularly social life; the big dreams, often of strangely poetic force and beauty, have a

> mythic and often mystical significance and involve striking images of such things as wise old men, hero figures or treasures buried beneath the sea. "Such dreams occur mostly during the critical phases of life," said Jung, "particularly in early youth, puberty, at the onset of middle age, and within sight of death."

The article recalls that artists such as Mozart and Edgar Allan Poe, Einstein among scientists, as well as "scores of other highly creative people, regularly relied on dreams for new insights," and closes with a quotation from Friedrich Kekulé, who discovered the structure of the benzene molecule from the symbolism of a dream. "Let us," Kekulé said, "learn how to dream, gentlemen, and then perhaps we will discover the truth."

Changed Spirit

It is a long, long way from these guesses and speculations to the clear account of the meaning of dreams given by H.P. Blavatsky in *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge,* although Kekulé's remark comes close to the truth in one respect: "It is by cultivating the power of what is called 'dreaming'," H.P.B. said, "that clairvoyance is developed." Other treatments which might be studied for the Theosophic view of dreaming and the various states of sleep will be found in two articles by William Q. Judge, "The Three Planes of Human Life," and "Seership." However, one clearly favorable comment on present-day studies may be made: Some of the investigators seem willing to look for philosophic answers concerning the meaning of dreams, and the old materialism and simplistic Freudian interpretations are much less in evidence. It seems almost certain that researchers who proceed in this spirit are likely to make some useful discoveries.

Philosophic Geometry

Increasingly, a new spirit is evident in the practice of the sciences. Arthur Young's *The Geometry of Meaning* (Delacorte, 1976) is a fine example of the rebirth of philosophic inquiry in the matrix of scientific investigation. In this book he endeavors to show that implicit in the relationships with which geometry deals are analogies and correspondences suggestive of philosophic truth. The central purpose of the study is to demonstrate the freedom of the human will and the sterility of a science which ignores this reality. While the mathematical logic employed may be somewhat beyond the general reader, the Theosophical student

will nonetheless be impressed by the quality of the conclusions reached. There is for example this general statement concerning evolution:

> . . . the freedoms which were lost in the descent into matter are regained in the ascent of evolution, but with a significant difference. What was random and blind on the descent becomes voluntary or controllable at will in the ascent. The trap of time and the trap of space become the power to organize forces and to animate forms. The means that brought the fall makes possible the ascent, and what is at first a constraint, when understood, becomes the agent for freedom.

"The Universe Has Feelings"

That consciousness is the foundation of all reality is fundamental for Mr. Young. This idea, he believes, is rigorously scientific:

> It is customary to think of love, attraction, pleasure, pain, etc., as subjective, not "out there" in the universe. Hume is immortalized in histories of philosophy because he showed that we do not know causality objectively. It is a mental habit. The history of Western thought has tended first to divide the universe into interior and exterior, and then to discredit the interior by saying it is not there, or is purely "subjective," by which is meant interior to persons.
>
> What is overlooked in this reasoning is that the universe also includes the nonobjective factor. The proton attracts the electron; the nuclear force binds the atom; the planets move in closed orbits; the universe has feelings. Physicists call them forces. To deny their existence in favor of objective "formulations" is pure sophistry.

There is, Mr. Young shows, a level of causation which has no mechanistic explanation, or where such explanations cannot be applied. Here "freedom," or an uncaused cause, must be stipulated, but on the lower levels action is determinate, being based on antecedent causes. The author seems to repeat in other words the rule given early in *The Secret Doctrine*: Parabrahm is that which is supreme and not supreme—supreme as cause, not supreme as effect.

The Purpose of Life Is To Learn

A concluding passage illustrates the temper of this volume:

> Life consists of all phases of the cycle of becoming. All kinds of action, experience, and thought have their value. The optimum life does not imply sitting in the dead center, being

> nothing. It rather teaches that all things have their place and importance and follow one another, like the rolling of a great wheel.
>
> The Buddhists teach how to escape from the wheel, but I rather think they mean we should escape from endless repetition of the same cycle. Each new cycling should be a new adventure, incorporating, not repeating, what has gone before.

Mind, in Mr. Young's view, is both the initiator of action and the victim of the illusions which action creates, yet, in the end, the resolver of illusion and the restorer of the original unity at a higher level.

Mind Finding Itself

Passages in "Symmetry in Nature and Art," a paper by G. Christian Amstutz, of the University of Heidelberg, published in the BASF *Review* for May, 1969), illustrate in another way the growing respect for mind among scientific thinkers and teachers of science. Speaking of the parallels between the symmetries of natural forms and those found in works of art, he says:

> According to Bacon, art consists in the subjection of things to mind whereas, in science, mind is subjected to things. We know nowadays, however, that the second half of this aphorism was largely based on an illusion of the age and that objectivity, then so much idolized, does not exist in the way men dreamed of. So it is only the first half of Bacon's dictum which is interesting in this context—that things of nature are subjected to mind or, to put it less aggressively, that the mind adapts itself to the things of nature, using them as form and colour of expression, interpreting them and finding itself through contact with them.

Prof. Amstutz's concluding observations are suggestive of the "religion of nature," which H.P.B. calls "the one ennobling religion of Humanity." He says:

> It might be added in passing that in many respects our whole life could be described as an attempt to achieve agreements, a search and a striving for symmetry. It is no exaggeration to say that the weal and woe of the world now depend on whether we discover the great agreements, relationships and thus the great symmetries inherent in everything, and seek the common bond which unites, rather than project oppositions, enmity and asymmetry into our neighbors.

The Law of Harmony

In scientific research it is not simply a question of rediscov-

ering, by acquiring knowledge of nature, the symmetrical qualities innate in us, but the mutual symmetrical affinities in human society must be revealed and must show that we are all "in the same boat," that in fact the polar symmetry of human life points in the same direction for all of us, and that opposition can lead only to the destruction of symmetry and thus of harmony and life in general. If we do not realise that the opposition between interior and exterior, for example, is a myth, it may prove our destruction. If, on the other hand, we do realise this, it can become a fruitful source of energy and finally lead to recognition of the fact which Goethe has expressed very finely in the lines . . .

> Students of nature, make this your goal:
> Heed the specimen, heed the Whole.
> Nothing is inside or out;
> What's within must outward sprout.
> So without delay one sees
> Sacred open mysteries.

Is Upward "Onward"?

Not content, apparently, with the fame and numerous followers already achieved by the Transcendental Meditation movement, its leaders have announced "a new break-through in human potential: the ability to levitate and become invisible." We learn from a report in the *Mendocino Grapevine* for Aug. 11 that a new kind of "research" has been going on at the movement's headquarters in Switzerland, where "thousands of teachers" are said to have been "taking advanced courses with Maharishi." Among them, it would seem, are lessons in levitation and becoming invisible. These abilities are called "a practical means to greatly enhance the growth of enlightenment."

Psycho-physical Explanation

Interestingly, in *Isis Unveiled* H.P.B. remarks that levitation is either magic, the feat of an adept, or a kind of disease. The subject is discussed at some length in both "Before the Veil" (xxiii) and in chapter XIII of Vol. I. Little claim is made for its "spiritual" distinction, but rather the subject is examined for the light it throws on the psycho-dynamics of man's relationship to natural forces such as gravitation. After noting the observation of a European investigator that epileptics and ecstatics may sometimes rise as much as two and a half yards above their beds, H.P.B. says:

> Were our physicians to experiment on such levitated subjects, it would be found that they are strongly charged with a similar form of electricity to that of the spot, which, according to the law of gravitation, ought to *attract* them, or rather prevent their levitation. And, if some physical nervous disorder, as well as spiritual ecstasy produce unconsciously to the subject the same effects, it proves that if this force in nature were properly studied, it could be regulated at will. (*I.U.* I, xxiv-v.)

Control of Polarity

In Chap. XIII she remarks that levitation may sometimes be a mechanical phenomenon, involving elementals or the morbific causes affecting sick somnambules, going on to say:

> The levitation of the adept is, on the contrary, a magneto-electric effect. . . . He has made the polarity of his body opposite to that of the atmosphere, and identical with that of the earth; hence, attractable by the former, retaining his consciousness the while. A like phenomenal levitation is possible, also, when disease has changed the corporeal polarity of a patient, as disease always does in a greater or lesser degree. But, in such a case, the lifted person would not be likely to remain conscious. (*Isis Unveiled* I, 497-98.)

It will be of interest to see how extensively the Transcendental Meditators attempt to demonstrate their latest "break-through."

Miracle-Seeking "Occultists"!

A writer whose previous works suggest that he is versed in astrology, Marc Edmund Jones, now offers a volume titled *Occult Philosophy* (Shambhala Publications), in which there seems a little effort toward scholarship, with some credit to H.P.B. but no serious attention to her philosophy. For example, in the section headed "The Basic Truths," the author lists "The Acceptance of Miracles" as the first requirement of the would-be occultist. While this is elaborated as an "affirmation of superphysical experience," the qualification helps very little. The passage continues: "The mind is asked to welcome and trust spiritistic phenomena, and to pin its major hope on the marvelous." Curiously, while this writer speaks gravely of H.P.B. as a source of occult philosophy, referring to her and her Teachers, he seems not to be acquainted with the fundamental propositions coming toward the end of H.P.B.'s first work, *Isis Unveiled*. She begins this summary with the words: "There is no miracle."

Islamic Poet and Sage

The West knows little of Islam and Islamic culture, and save for what is said by H.P.B. about the Sufis, there is not a great deal concerning Muslim culture and philosophy in Theosophical literature. It becomes of special interest, therefore, to learn from a New American Library paperback, *Science and Civilization in Islam,* that Omar Khayyam (1044-1124) wrote not only great poetry but was esteemed during his lifetime as both a mathematician and a philosopher. The author of this useful work, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, a professor at Tehran University, remarks: "That he [Omar] should be regarded in the Western world, on the strength of his famous quatrains, as a skeptical hedonist is itself a sign of the profound lack of understanding between the two worlds; for he was in reality a sage and a gnostic of high standing." Mr. Nasr quotes from a metaphysical text by Khayyam, in which he speaks of various seekers for truth.

Doctrine of Universal Man

Summarizing a portion of this text by a writer known to us only as a poet, this modern Muslim says:

> Khayyam mentions, finally, the Sufis or gnostics, the group to which he himself belonged. It may seem surprising that a man so well versed in the arts and sciences of his day should consider the "way of purification" of the Sufis as the best way of acquiring knowledge. His language in this regard, however, is not merely theoretical, it is almost operational: one cleanses and focuses the instrument of perception, *i.e.*, the soul, so that it may see the realities of the spiritual world. Aristotle himself, the great rationalist, had once said that "knowledge is according to the mode of the knower." The gnostic, in employing the "right" mode of knowledge ensures that Intellection takes place in him immediately and intuitively. In this regard, Khayyam's statement becomes clearer when seen in the light of . . . the doctrine of the universal man, who is not only the final goal of the spiritual life, but also the archetype of the universe.
>
> To the extent that the gnostic is able to purify himself of his individualistic and particular nature, and thus to identify himself with the universal man within him, to that same extent does he also gain knowledge of the principles of the cosmos, as well as of the Divine realities.

These are familiar ideas to the student of Theosophy, showing, once again, the underlying unity of the great religions of the world, in their inner aspect or teaching.

"Simple Burial"

Now available is a new edition of *A Manual of Death Education and Simple Burial,* by Ernest Morgan. This valuable handbook lists the various funeral and memorial societies around the country, formed by persons desiring to help themselves and others to "obtain dignity, simplicity, and economy in funeral arrangements through pre-planning." (Copies of the manual may be purchased at $2.00 from the Celo Press, a division of Arthur Morgan School, Route 5, Burnsville, North Carolina 28714.) The movement for simple, inexpensive burial began in this country in 1939 with the formation of cooperative groups of people wishing to avoid not only the cost but the indignity of elaborate and pretentious funerals. These groups have gradually grown in number and today there are burial or memorial societies in some 170 cities in the United States and Canada. Cost of membership varies, but is seldom more than an initial fee of $20. The advantages of belonging to such a society are multiple, as a reading of the *Manual* will show. Most of the societies have arranged agreements with existing mortuaries for simple services involving taking charge of the bodily remains with disposition by cremation or burial in earth. The virtues of cremation are described in the *Manual.* So far as expense is concerned, one large society estimates that its members save upwards of a million dollars a year by belonging to the society. The names and addresses of the societies offering this help are given by cities.

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